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RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE 3424
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STATE FOR WHA/CAR RCBUDDEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/05/2016

TAGS: [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [BF](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORTS ON CUBAN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES IN
BAHAMAS

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Brent Hardt for reasons 1.4(b),
(c) and (d).

¶1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: Local media sources have reported the presence of at least five Cuban intelligence officers in The Bahamas. The operatives, allegedly working undercover in Bahamian retail establishments and with Havantur, are reportedly gathering intelligence regarding Cuban-Americans in The Bahamas, Cuban migrants transiting to the United States, and Bahamian officials, business persons and other travelers to Cuba. One report says that the Cuban embassy purchases operative access to The Bahamas in return for provision of financial benefits to Bahamian government officials. Additionally, sources indicate that Hulmut Domenech Gonzalez, a former officer in the Cuba Interest Section in Washington before his expulsion for espionage in 2003, worked for Cuban intelligence in The Bahamas in 2003 and 2004. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (S/NF) The Tribune, a well-respected local newspaper, has written a series of articles critical of Cuba, including articles regarding Cuban intelligence activities in The Bahamas. On October 5, 2006, Poloff spoke with Paul Turnquest, a reporter with The Tribune and a trusted embassy contact, regarding the articles. According to Turnquest, the Tribune received a series of calls from multiple sources regarding Cuban intelligence activities beginning in September. The sources were initially not well-known to The Tribune, but according to Turnquest, "a reliable source with direct knowledge gave us confirmation of Cuban intelligence activities this week that justified reporting today."

¶3. (S/NF) Poloff met with Tribune Managing Editor John Marquis on October 10 as part of ongoing human rights and elections monitoring. During the meeting, Poloff raised the Tribune articles regarding Cuban espionage. Marquis said he personally drafted the articles with staff, and reaffirmed his confidence in well-placed sources in the local Cuban community. Marquis said he was working on additional articles, including one regarding a former high-ranking Cuban military official, currently married to a Bahamian man, who is involved in espionage activity in Nassau.

¶4. (S/NF) According to Turnquest and Marquis, at least five Cuban agents working undercover primarily in Nassau retail businesses, including Havanatur, are gathering intelligence about Cuban-Americans in The Bahamas, Cuban migrants transiting The Bahamas and Bahamian officials, business persons and other travelers to Cuba. "Their primary aim is

to track Cubans from Miami who use Nassau as a staging post on the way to Havana," said Marquis, "but local politicians, business people and media figures are also (targets)." Marquis and Turnquest noted that "Cubans use women and 'a good time' to compromise Bahamian politicians and others in an effort to get them over to their side."

15. (S/NF) Tribune sources also say that Hulmut Domenech Gonzalez worked as an Cuban operative in Nassau in 2003 and 2004, apparently under a work permit issued by the Bahamian Government. Mr. Gonzalez allegedly worked at Havantur primarily to gather intelligence regarding Mr. Nelson Garcia, another Havantur employee who was thought to have contacts in the Miami Cuban community and intended to migrate to Florida. The Tribune reported that Mr. Gonzalez came to Nassau in 2003 -- shortly after his expulsion from the United States for espionage activity -- and stayed for up to one year.

16. (S/NF) In an October 16 article, The Tribune separately reported claims by Bahamian resident Dr. Jose Lopez that the Cuban embassy is systematically gaining operative access to The Bahamas by provision of free Cuban travel and accommodations to Bahamian officials. Lopez claims that the Bahamas location, growing economy and financial sector make it an attractive location for Cuban intelligence.

17. (S/NF) COMMENT: The Bahamas sits between the US and Cuba both geographically and politically. The Bahamian government continually struggles, with mixed success, to balance its relations between the two nations, and to meet the challenges posed by its unavoidable role as a transit point between Cuba and the U.S. The presence of a Cuban Embassy and a vocal minority of pro-Castro leftists in a relatively open country offer an attractive environment for

Cuban operatives. The regular presence of Miami Cubans in The Bahamas for leisure and to visit illegal Cuban migrants at Nassau's Carmichael Road Detention Center also adds elements of interest for Cuban intelligence. END COMMENT.
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